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ABSTRACT

The reason that people think women and men differ in their general qualities may be that the two sexes tend to be observed in different social roles. To explore the sources of stereotypes about men and women several experiments were conducted. Most of the studies involved randomly selected college students who were presented with a description of a male or female stimulus person and asked to rate that person. Each experiment varied the aspect of social role that might account for gender stereotypes, including job status or designation as employee or homemaker, dual role, freedom of role choice, and part-time employment. In general the studies provided strong support for the social structural analysis of gender stereotypes. Beliefs that women are especially communal and men are especially agentic reflect observations that women and men are differently distributed into homemaker and employee roles, which are thought to require different personal qualities. Perceivers formed their concept of women on the basis of observing a fairly high proportion of individuals committed to the domestic role, while men were observed primarily committed to the employee role. The fact that subjects judged personality attributes suggests that homemakers and employees differ not just in role behavior but also in their underlying dispositions. Efforts to remove gender stereotypes educationally may have relatively little impact compared with actual changes in the distribution of the sexes into social roles. (JAC)

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Gender Stereotypes and Social Roles

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Invited address presented at the meeting of the Midwestern Psychological Association, May 1984.

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RUNNING HEAD: Gender Stereotypes

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Gender Stereotypes and Social Roles

I am going to discuss the relation between social roles and gender stereotypes. In particular, I will argue that gender stereotypes reflect the differing distributions of women and men into social roles. In other words, the main reason that people think that women and men differ in their personal qualities is that the two sexes tend to be observed in different social roles.

Before explaining the basis for the linkage between social roles and gender stereotypes, I will note that research on gender stereotypes is a relatively new focus within social psychologists' long-term concern with stereotyping. Investigations of stereotyping extend back to the 1920's when the term "stereotype" was coined by Walter Lippmann in his book Public Opinion (1922). He defined stereotypes as the "pictures in our heads" of other groups of people. Although Lippmann thought that stereotyping is functionally necessary as a part of a categorization process, he believed that stereotypes are usually rigid, factually incorrect, and produced through illogical reasoning. This view of stereotypes as incorrect and misleading remains popular, both among psychologists and the public.

Early research on stereotypes examined people's beliefs about national groups. Investigations such as Katz and Braly's 1933 study presented descriptive findings on numerous stereotypes--for example, Italians were believed to be artistic, impulsive, and passionate, and Americans to be industrious, intelligent, and materialistic. Although research on national

stereotypes continued (e.g., Karlins, Coffman, & Walters, 1969), in the 1960's and 70's investigators branched out to study racial and ethnic stereotypes, especially stereotypes about black Americans (e.g., Smedley & Bayton, 1978).

As research progressed, social psychologists settled on a definition of the term stereotype as a set of beliefs about the personal attributes of a group of people (see Miller, 1982). Especially when referring to cultural or social stereotypes, psychologists have included in the definition the idea that stereotypes are consensual or widely shared in a society. Indeed, research has shown that there is moderately high consensus about many of the attributes ascribed to national groups and to races.

As far as Lippmann's belief that stereotypes are factually incorrect, most psychologists have preferred to reserve judgment. The issue of the validity of stereotypes is sometimes referred to as the "kernal of truth" issue. As you might expect, it is impossible to pass judgment on the truth value of stereotypes in a simple way, because it is usually not clear what the criterion should be in validating a stereotype. Yet this validity issue remains challenging and can be more broadly conceived as the task of understanding the sources or origins of stereotypes--what kind of information underlies stereotypes of social groups? The work that I will describe today explores the sources of stereotypes about women and men.

The study of gender stereotypes first became popular in the early 1970's when the women's movement focussed social scientists' attention on gender.

The most influential and widely cited research from that period is that of Inge Broverman and several of her collaborators (e.g., Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1972). These studies documented that there are widely shared beliefs about the personal attributes of women and men. According to this research and that of other investigators, most recently that of my colleagues Kay Deaux and Laurie Lewis (in press), the great majority of the beliefs that people hold about the differences between women and men can be summarized in terms of two dimensions, both of which define positive human qualities. These two dimensions almost always are found in factor analytic studies of the personal attributes people ascribe to women and men.

One of these dimensions describes a concern with the welfare of other people, and women are believed to manifest this concern more strongly than men. As indicated on the first table, this dimension has been termed warmth-expressiveness, expressiveness, social-orientation, or femininity by various investigators. I prefer to borrow David Bakan's (1966) term communion and label this dimension the communal dimension. According to the definition of communion that Bakan provided in his book The Duality of Human Existence (1966), communal qualities are manifested by selflessness, concern with others, and a desire to be at one with others. Personal attributes that comprise this communal dimension include kind, helpful, understanding, warm, aware of others' feelings, and able to devote self to others.

The other dimension describes an assertive and controlling tendency, and

men are believed to manifest this tendency more strongly than women. As shown on the second table, this dimension has been termed instrumentality, competency, task-orientation, or masculinity by various investigators. I prefer to borrow David Bakan's term agency and label this dimension the agentic dimension. According to Bakan's definition, agentic qualities are manifested by self-assertion, self-expansion, and the urge to master. Personal attributes that comprise this dimension include active, not easily influenced, aggressive, independent, dominant, self-confident, competitive, makes decisions easily, never gives up easily, and stands up well under pressure.

The early work on gender stereotypes had a certain consciousness-raising effect because the findings were widely believed to have quite negative implications for women. A major reason that the stereotype of women was thought to be very unfavorable was that Broverman and her associates (Broverman et al., 1972) labeled the agentic dimenson the "competency cluster." Their findings, when described in this way, seemed to suggest that women are believed to be generally incompetent. However, when viewed more closely, the traits that commonly load on this "masculine" dimension do not describe competence in general, but, rather, a much narrower quality closer to Bakan's agency--a tendency to assert oneself and to be concerned about controlling and mastering the environment. These attributes do not constitute a broad enough spectrum of human qualities to be interpreted in terms of

competence--or in terms of instrumentality, the name that is currently more popular as a label for this dimension. After all, communal qualities are instrumental in relation to important interpersonal goals, and communal qualities describe a type of competence--a competence in relating to other people, especially in close relationships. (I note parenthetically that expressiveness is scarcely an adequate term for the communal qualities. Communion primarily implies a caring orientation and selfless devotion to others--not a tendency to express one's thoughts and emotions.)

A fundamental question about gender stereotypes concerns their content--why are women believed to be especially communal and men to be especially agentic? Contrary to many psychologists' belief that stereotypes are biased and inaccurate, my underlying assumption is that stereotypes, particularly those of familiar groups with whom perceivers interact very frequently, reflect perceivers' observations of what people in these groups do in daily life. The logic is very simple. If perceivers often observe a particular group of people engaging in an activity, they are likely to believe that the abilities and personality attributes required to carry out that activity are typical of that group of people. In the case of women, for example, if perceivers consistently observe women caring for children, they are likely to believe that the characteristics thought to be necessary for child care, such as nurturance and warmth, are typical of women.

If observations of people's activities form the basis of stereotypes, it is important to ask how these activities are patterned and organized. Are

there any regularities in people's activities--regularities that covary with the social groups to which they belong? To answer this question, a sociological stance is required because people's activities are a product of their social roles, and, to a lesser extent, of broader aspects of social structure such as social class. Therefore, beliefs that subgroups in our society, such as women and men, differ from one another arise when these subgroups are differently distributed within the society, particularly into differing social roles. In the case of women and men, there are very important differences in the social roles that are commonly occupied.

To explain the content of gender stereotypes from this social structural perspective, we considered the two most fundamental differences in the distribution of women and men into social roles in our society: one difference is that women are more likely than men to hold positions at low levels in hierarchies of status and authority and less likely to hold higher level positions, and a second difference is that women are more likely than men to be homemakers and less likely to be employed in the paid workforce.

Sex differences in status might account for the communal and agentic aspects of gender stereotypes if people who are lower in hierarchies of status and authority are perceived to be more communal and less agentic than those who have higher status positions. Perceivers' observations of women in lower status positions than men could lead them to conclude that women are more communal and less agentic than men. (I might add that this hypothesis stemmed

in part from earlier research that Wendy Wood and I carried out on stereotypes about social influence (Eagly & Wood, 1982). We demonstrated that the stereotypic beliefs that women are compliant and men are dominant stem from perceivers' inferences that (a) women occupy lower status positions than men and (b) the lower an individual's status relative to other persons, the more that individual yields to their influence.)

As an alternative possibility, the differing distributions of women and men into the roles of homemaker and employee may underlie gender stereotypes. Of course, women are much more likely to be employed outside the home now than in earlier decades. Yet women and men still differ considerably in their participation in the paid labor force: About 51% of women and 77% of men are employed. Also, men are rarely found in the domestic role. Therefore, we hypothesized that the differences that people perceive between homemakers and employees parallel the stereotypic differences between women and men--that is, homemakers are perceived as more communal and less agentic than employed people. Because perceivers disproportionately observe women in the homemaker role and men in the employee role, they may conclude that women are more communal and less agentic than men.

Experiments on Perceived Communion and Agency

With Valerie Steffen, who is a graduate student at Purdue, I have carried out several experiments in order to test these ideas (Eagly & Steffen, 1984b). Our methods in these experiments can be easily described. Most of the subjects were students who were randomly sampled at various locations on

campus. Each subject was presented with a description of only one person, called a stimulus person, and asked to rate that person. Half of the stimulus persons were female, and half were male.

In each experiment we varied the aspect of social roles that we thought might account for gender stereotypes. In the experiments examining status, some stimulus persons had high status job titles and some had low status job titles, and in the experiments examining the homemaker-employee distinction, some stimulus persons were homemakers and others were employees.

For other stimulus persons, social role was not mentioned: In the status experiments, the job title was omitted, and in the homemaker-employee experiments, designation as a homemaker or employed person was omitted. When the information about the stimulus person's social role is unavailable, subjects should ascribe gender-stereotypic attributes to them, because they have formed their concepts of women and men based on observations of women and men in largely different social roles in the society. When subjects know the stimulus person's social role and sex, role information should determine their beliefs about the person's attributes. As a consequence, women and men who have the same role were expected to be perceived equivalently.

In our experiments, each subject read a description of a female or male stimulus person and rated her or him on 18 gender-stereotypic personality attributes. Factor analyses of these ratings yielded two orthogonal dimensions--a communal factor and an agentic factor. An average of subjects'

ratings on the items loading on the communal factor (for example, kind, helpful, understanding, warm) yielded an index of perceived communion, and an average of subjects' ratings on the items loading on the agentic factor (for example, aggressive, dominant, self-confident, competitive) yielded an index of perceived agency.

Status Experiments

Our first two experiments examined sex differences in status as a possible source of gender stereotypes. I will summarize these experiments briefly since their findings did not support the hypothesis that belief in female communion and male agency is explained by women's lower status. Yet the two studies did generate some provocative findings.

In the first experiment, subjects read a brief description of a female or male stimulus person who worked in a bank or supermarket, and whose job title was high or low status or no job title was mentioned. In the bank the high status job title was vice-president and the low status job title was teller, and in the supermarket the jobs were manager and cashier. For example, one description was the following: "Phil Moore is about 35 years old and has been employed for a number of years by a supermarket. He is one of the managers." Respondents rated the stimulus person on the stereotypic communal and agentic attributes and also estimated the person's salary. For the stimulus persons without job titles, they also guessed their job title.

The findings are shown in the table for Experiment 1. These numbers are on a 5-point scale (1-5) on which larger numbers indicate greater communion or

agency. On perceived communion, there were few differences. Status did not affect the communal tendency, contrary to our hypothesis, and women were perceived as only marginally more communal than men. On perceived agency, we obtained the expected status effect: high-status people were believed to be more agentic than low-status people. The sex difference in agency surprised us: women were perceived as more agentic than men, regardless of status, even though women were thought to have lower salaries than men.

Because some aspects of these findings were somewhat puzzling, we carried out a second experiment that varied status. To make sure that our findings would be generalizable to a wide variety of settings, we included a medical clinic and a university department of biology as well as the bank and supermarket settings utilized in the first experiment. Another change is that subjects rated the stimulus persons' on-the-job behavior rather than their personal attributes. If observations of job status account for gender stereotypes, differences in the way women and men are perceived should be more evident in judgments of on-the-job behavior.

These changes had very little effect on our findings, which are shown in the table for Experiment 2. On perceived communion, there was again no effect of status, and women were believed to be significantly more communal than men (although not in the high-status condition). On perceived agency, high-status persons were again more agentic than low status persons. Again, women were more agentic than men, despite their lower salaries and the lower-status job

titles ascribed to them when we did not provide a job title.

In general, these two experiments did not support the hypothesis that the stereotypic perception of women as communal and men as agentic stems from perceivers' observations of women and men in occupational roles that differ only in status. In addition, we obtained the interesting finding that women were judged to be more agentic than men. We suspected that this finding might have been obtained because all of our stimulus persons were employed. Therefore, to clarify these data and to test our alternative hypothesis, we examined employee and homemaker roles as a possible source of gender stereotypes.

Homemaker vs. Employee Experiment

In this third experiment, we examined our alternate hypothesis--that gender stereotypes stem from the differing distributions of women and men into the roles of homemaker and employee. Thus, women are believed to be communal because they have been seen in the homemaker role (and men have not); men are believed to be agentic because they have been seen in the employee role (and women have been seen less commonly in this role). We hypothesized that the differences perceived between homemakers and employees would parallel the stereotypic differences between women and men--that is, homemakers would be perceived as more communal and less agentic than employed people. Because we believed that gender stereotypes are a product of role differences, we also hypothesized that women and men would not be perceived to differ if they were known to have the same role. Yet, contrary to our theory and based on the

findings of our first two experiments, we suspected that female employees would be perceived as even more agentic than male employees. Consistent with our theory, we hypothesized that stimulus persons whose role assignment as homemaker or employee is unknown would be perceived stereotypically because of subjects' previous observations of women in the homemaker role and men in the employee role.

In this experiment, subjects rated the personality attributes of an average woman or man, an average woman or man who is employed full-time, or an average woman or man who cares for a home and children and is not employed outside the home. Subjects also judged how likely it was that the average woman and man were employed. As shown in the table for Experiment 3, ratings of the average woman and the average man (the stimulus persons with no occupational description) replicated the traditional gender stereotype of women as communal and men as agentic. In addition, regardless of sex, homemakers were perceived to be considerably more communal than employees and considerably less agentic. Furthermore, on a correlational basis, the more likely subjects thought it was that the average woman was employed, the lower was her perceived communion, r (38) = -.19, $p < .25$, and the higher was her perceived agency, r (38) = .43, $p < .01$. Women and men were rated quite similarly in communion and agency once their social role as homemaker or employee was specified. Yet there was one exception: once again employed women were perceived as significantly more agentic than employed men. Except

for this greater agency of female employees, our social structural theory received strong support. Our findings suggest that the stereotype that women are communal and men are agentic reflects observations of women and men as differently distributed into homemaker and employee roles.

Yet the heightened agency ascribed to employed women remained a puzzling finding that required explanation. Although there are numerous possible explanations for this counterstereotypic belief, we were able to discount several of them on the basis of the experiments that we had already carried out:

1. One explanation is that subjects are no longer willing to derogate women on stereotype questionnaires. Perhaps gender stereotypes have faded, or perhaps people are too wary to make stereotypic judgments on questionnaires. This explanation was discounted by subjects' perception in the third experiment that the average woman's agency is lower than the average man's.
2. A second explanation is that female employees were rated more extremely because they were believed to be more highly selected for their jobs than male employees. This idea was discounted by the finding that male homemakers, who are surely less common than female employees, were not perceived to differ from female homemakers.
3. A third explanation is that employed women were believed to be especially agentic because they had to overcome discrimination to obtain their jobs. This explanation was discounted by the finding in our first two experiments that women employees were perceived as especially agentic in low

status and female-dominated jobs such as supermarket cashier as well as in high status jobs such as bank vice president. It seems unlikely that subjects believed that women face discrimination in obtaining low-status positions, especially the predominately female-occupied positions we utilized in our experiments.

4. A fourth explanation is that employed women's perceived agency reflects a semantic or response-language difference in the way women and men are judged rather than a true difference in how women and men are perceived. According to this explanation, female employees might be implicitly compared with other females and therefore appear quite agentic, whereas male employees might be implicitly compared with other males and therefore not be seen as especially agentic. Such a response-language interpretation has a poor fit to our homemaker data. By this argument, perceivers would implicitly compare male homemakers with other males and consequently perceive them as very high in communion. Female homemakers, being compared with other females, should not be so high in communion. The finding that male and female homemakers were perceived equivalently, then, does not support a semantic or response-language interpretation.

Dual-Role Experiment

Having found those explanations inadequate, we carried out a fourth experiment, which was designed to investigate yet another explanation for the high level of agency ascribed to employed women. According to this

explanation, perceivers have observed that employed women carry a double burden because they often balance two demanding roles--homemaker and employee. Perceivers may have noted that such women tend to be masterful and self-assertive, as they must be to cope with this situation of potential role overload and role conflict. Therefore, we hypothesized that married female employees with children would be perceived as especially agentic. If the double burden is responsible for this perception, employed single parents of both sexes would also be perceived as especially agentic, because they lack a partner with whom they might share domestic or employment responsibilities.

In this experiment, we varied the family responsibilities of employed women and men, to create varying degrees of double-burden. Subjects rated the personality attributes of an average woman or man who is employed full-time, and who is either married or single and who either has children or does not have children. Other subjects rated an employed woman or man whose marital and parental statuses were not described. The findings are shown in the table for Experiment 4. The dual role explanation of employed women's greater agency did not fare well. It was contradicted by the finding that neither marital status nor responsibility for children affected ratings of women's or men's agency. Once again, female employees were perceived as more agentic than male employees, and there was no sex difference on perceived communion. Yet both marital and parental status affected perceived communion: Parents were judged more communal than non-parents and married people more communal than single people. Data relevant to the double-burden idea were also

provided by subjects' judgments of the amount of household and family work accomplished by the stimulus persons. The fact that there was no perceived sex difference on this measure suggested that subjects did not believe that employed women suffer from a greater double burden than employed men.

Freedom of Choice Experiment

Still lacking an adequate explanation of the relatively high level of agency ascribed to employed women, we turned to a freedom-of-choice hypothesis. We proposed this hypothesis somewhat reluctantly because it is not congenial to our feminist orientation. Nevertheless, we proposed that the enhanced agency of employed women stems from perceivers' observations that employed women often have chosen to be employed whereas their male counterparts have not. In other words, people may have observed that it is relatively common that employed women really don't have to work, and they may believe that people who are employed even though they are not required to work outside the home do so because they possess agentic personal qualities.

In our test of this freedom-of-choice idea, subjects rated the personality attributes of an employed woman or man whose freedom of choice was not described, or they rated a woman or man described either as employed by choice or employed out of necessity. Substantiating our assumption that women tend to be perceived as not having to work outside the home, the female employee whose freedom of choice was not described was rated as less likely than the comparable male to be working out of necessity: 49% of female

employees and 67% of male employees were judged to work because they have to work. As shown in the table for Experiment 5, we replicated the finding we were trying to explain: The female employee whose freedom of choice was not described was perceived as more agentic than her male counterpart (although she did not differ from him on communion). As predicted, employees who chose to work were perceived as more agentic than employees who worked out of necessity. The agency of the employed woman whose freedom of choice was not described did not differ from that of the woman employed by choice and was greater than that of the woman employed out of necessity. In addition, on a correlational basis, the less choice subjects ascribed to the woman whose freedom of choice was not mentioned, the lower was her perceived agency, $r(38) = .55$, $p < .001$. As expected, because relatively little freedom of choice was ascribed to male employees, the agency of the male employee about whom no choice information was given was between that of the man employed by choice and the man employed out of necessity.

These findings are consistent with our hypothesis that employed women are believed to be more agentic than employed men because they have been observed to be more often employed by choice than their male counterparts. Because jobs are thought to require agentic behavior, freedom of choice may have this effect because it leads perceivers to make the correspondent inference (Jones & Davis, 1965) that an employee's agentic behavior stems from agentic personality attributes.

The perception that women are likely to be employed by choice probably

arises from the assumption that women's primary obligation is to care for the home and children. Because traditionally the role of homemaker has not included any obligation to seek employment outside the home, the assumption that women are likely to be homemakers suggests that many employed women are employed by choice and not by necessity. Therefore, even the perception of employed women as especially agentic probably reflects observations of sex differences in distribution into occupational roles and is thereby compatible with our social role theory of gender stereotypes.

Part-Time Employee Experiment

Finally, I will briefly describe a sixth study that Valerie Steffen and I carried out on occupational roles (Eagly & Steffen, 1984a). In this study we focussed on beliefs about the communion and agency of part-time employees, in comparison to homemakers, full-time employees, and persons without occupational descriptions. We believed that the findings we obtained earlier, particularly the perception of employed women as especially agentic, would be confined to full-time employees. Furthermore, we suspected that part-time employment might have quite different implications for women than men, because it would have different implications for the division of one's efforts between the domestic and employment roles. Thus, for women, part-time employment often functions as an adjunct to the traditional homemaker role. If so, women who are employed part-time would not be perceived in terms of the traditional male stereotype of high agency and low communion that we found was ascribed to

full-time employees. Rather, women who are employed part-time would be perceived as moderately similar to homemakers--that is, as relatively high in communion and low in agency.

We suspected that beliefs about men who are employed part-time might be quite different from those about women employed part-time, since people may have observed that part-time employment for men is associated with unemployment or with inability or unwillingness to fulfill the traditional male breadwinner role. We thought it relatively unlikely that a man's part-time employment would be interpreted as a sign of commitment to domestic responsibilities.

Our study replicated the homemaker-employee experiment I described earlier and added a man and a woman employed part-time. The findings, shown in the table for Experiment 6, were as expected. The female part-time employee was perceived as only very slightly more agentic than the homemaker, although as less communal. In contrast, the male part-time employee was perceived as especially low in agency--the lowest of any of our stimulus persons, and he was no more communal than the full-time employee. Other findings from this study documented that people think that a woman is employed part-time because she has domestic responsibilities and a man is employed part-time because he has difficulty in finding other work, or possibly because he lacks motivation or energy to hold a full-time job.

This study fits in with our social role theory of gender stereotypes because it shows that beliefs about the agentic and communal attributes of

part-time employees are also controlled by observations of how people's efforts are divided between domestic duties and employment outside the home. Agency is associated with commitment to the employment role and communion with commitment to the domestic role.

Conclusion

In general, this series of studies provided strong support for our social structural analysis of gender stereotypes. Beliefs that women are especially communal and men are especially agentic reflect observations that women and men are differently distributed into homemaker and employee roles, which are thought to require different personal qualities. Evidently people have observed that homemakers tend to behave communally and employees tend to behave agentically. Stereotypes concerning communal and agentic qualities have become associated with the sexes because perceivers formed their concept of woman on the basis of observing a fairly high proportion of individuals committed to the domestic role and they formed their concept of men on the basis of observing primarily individuals committed to the employee role.

Our research has implications for several issues that are current in the social cognition literature. Although I cannot take time to explore these issues in depth, let me mention two of them:

1. Locksley and her colleagues (Locksley, Borgida, Brekke, & Hepburn, 1980; Locksley, Hepburn, & Ortiz, 1982) have argued that specific individuating information about a person readily causes perceivers to revise their estimates

of the probability that a woman or man is characterized by a given gender-stereotypic trait such as assertiveness. Our analysis is generally compatible with Locksley's Bayesian analysis since we have shown that role cues override gender cues. Yet our analysis goes considerably further by accounting for the specific content of gender stereotypes. To account parsimoniously for the content of gender stereotypes, an investigator must find individuating information that is diagnostic of the particular set of attributes believed to characterize women and men--namely, the communal qualities ascribed to women and the agentic qualities ascribed to men. To explain these beliefs, an attribute must override the usual gender stereotype and have two additional effects: it must differentiate between the sexes, and it must relate to perceived agency and communion in opposite directions. Furthermore, to make theoretical sense, the attribute must be sociologically meaningful as a factor that constrains people's activities in such a way that women are assigned communally relevant tasks and men are assigned agentically relevant tasks. It is not clear whether information other than occupational role could have these effects.

2. Cantor and Mischel (1979) and other psychologists have examined whether there is a basic level of categorization in person perception that people commonly utilize in representing others and imputing attributes to them. Categorizations at this basic level are held to maximize the richness, differentiation, and vividness of subjects' perceptions of people. Our findings, which are based on methods that are very different from those common

in the social cognition literature, suggest that the role level is more basic than gender in social perception. Gender is less basic because it is merely a cue that, on a probabilistic basis, gives perceivers access to information about occupation, which is highly diagnostic of people's attributes because it actually determine people's behaviors in natural settings.

Now I want to return to the kernal of truth issue with which I began. Our analysis and our findings suggest that the kernal of truth underlying gender stereotypes is substantial. People ascribe different personality attributes to women and men because they observe them as committed to quite different adult lives, with women more invested in the homemaker role than the typical man, and men more invested in the employee role than the typical woman. I have argued that homemakers and employees evidently have been observed to differ--that is, homemakers tend to behave communally and employees to behave agentically. To provide additional evidence that occupational role underlies gender stereotypes, it is important to ask whether homemaker and employee roles actually differ along communal and agentic lines. To answer this question, one could first of all perform a job analysis of the homemaker and employee roles. I suspect that such an analysis would reveal that the homemaker role requires a large component of the selflessness and concern for others that is the essence of communion. Although employment roles are very diverse, they may typically require a large component of the self-assertiveness and mastery of the environment that is the essence of

agency.

Yet the fact that the subjects in stereotype experiments ordinarily judge personality attributes suggests that homemakers and employees differ, not just in their role behavior, but in their underlying dispositions. Although there is no definitive proof that homemakers and employees differ in their more ingrained personal attributes, there is growing evidence that such differences may exist. Particularly relevant to this point is some recent research by Rosalind Barnett and Grace Baruch (Baruch, Barnett, & Rivers, 1983). These investigators related various self-report measures to the marital and employment status of female respondents. One of the dimensions on which these respondents differed was termed "mastery"--a dimension that is very close to the agentic dimension that appears in gender stereotype studies. Barnett and Baruch found that women's sense of mastery was predicted by their employment status: Employed women were higher in mastery that those who did not work outside the home. Also of interest is a recent study by Greenglass and Devins (1982), which related female undergraduates' career and marriage plans to their personalities. Using the Jackson Personality Research Form as the dependent measure, Greenglass and Devins (1982) found that women who intended to have an uninterrupted career tended to be more independent, domineering, and analytical than women who planned to stay home with children. These qualities of course match the agentic dimension of gender stereotypes. Women who planned to be homemakers were more socially sensitive and concerned with seeking sympathy, love, and reassurrance from other people--in other words,,

more communal. Other researchers (e.g., Gysbers, Johnston, & Gust, 1968; Rand, 1968) have reported similar findings when they related college women's career and family plans to their personalities: career-oriented women excell in agentic qualities, and home-oriented women excell in communal qualities. I suspect, then, that agentic and communal personal attributes, not merely role behaviors, covary with occupational roles.

In linking occupational roles and gender stereotypes and then suggesting that persons who differ in occupational role genuinely differ in agentic and communal personal attributes, I am proposing an analysis somewhat reminiscent of Parsons and Bales' (1955) analysis of gender-role specialization in the family. Parsons and Bales argued that there is a differentiation of function in the family along instrumental and expressive lines and that women adopt a primarily expressive role and men a primarily instrumental role. As other scholars have pointed out (e.g., Sherman, 1971; Slater, 1961), the Parsons and Bales analysis is problematic in several ways and is not entirely in accord with empirical studies of the division of labor in the home. Yet many of the problems with the Parsons and Bales analysis may stem from their treatment of this division of labor as a separation between the internal affairs of the family and relations between the family and the external society. Perhaps their insights into gender issues would had been less vulnerable to criticism had they distinguished, not internal from external orientations, but rather, as Bakan (1966), distinguished communal from agentic orientations. Parsons and

Bales' choice of the expressive and instrumental terms to label their distinction also detracted from their analysis because these terms led investigators to examine role behaviors and personality traits for differences in terms of these very broad dimensions. The plausibility of Parsons and Bales' theory is increased by restating it in terms of the more exact concepts of agency and communion and the less global idea of commitment to domestic and employment responsibilities. Such a theory would be generally compatible with the social structural theory of stereotyping that I have described today.

To conclude, I will mention one more implication of our idea that social stucture underlies beliefs about the differences between women and men. This implication is that change in these beliefs must await social change. Our theory and findings suggest that gender stereotypes--the beliefs that women in general differ from men in general--will not disappear until people divide social roles equally--until child-care and household responsibilities are shared equally by women and men, and the responsibility to be employed outside the home is borne equally. Most interventions designed to change ideas about gender attempt to work through education and exposure to the media--for example, insuring that textbooks have non-sexist portrayals of women and men. Such interventions would have some impact in terms of our theory since observations of people in social roles derive from indirect sources such as textbook portrayals as well as from direct experience. Yet daily life provides abundant direct experience with women and men. Therefore, efforts to

remove gender stereotypes educationally may have relatively little impact, compared with actual changes in the distribution of the sexes into social roles.

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COMMUNAL DIMENSION OF GENDER STEREOTYPES: Women are believed to be more communal than men. (Also called warmth-expressiveness, expressiveness, social-orientation, femininity.)

TYPICAL COMMUNAL PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES:

Kind
Helpful
Understanding
Warm
Aware of others' feelings
Able to devote self to others

AGENTIC DIMENSION OF GENDER STEREOTYPES: MEN ARE BELIEVED TO BE MORE AGENTIC THAN WOMEN. (ALSO CALLED INSTRUMENTALITY, COMPETENCE, TASK-ORIENTATION, MASCULINITY.)

TYPICAL AGENTIC PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES:

ACTIVE
NOT EASILY INFLUENCED
AGGRESSIVE
INDEPENDENT
DOMINANT
SELF-CONFIDENT
COMPETITIVE
MAKES DECISIONS EASILY
NEVER GIVES UP EASILY
STANDS UP WELL UNDER PRESSURE

Mean Ratings of Stereotypic Attributes of Female and Male Employees Who Varied in Status of Job Title: Experiment 1

Sex of Stimulus Person	Attribute Dimension	Status of job title		
		High Status	Low Status	No Job Title
Female	Communal	3.55	3.59	3.69
	Agentic	3.74	2.63	2.85
Male	Communal	3.41	3.58	3.48
	Agentic	3.52	2.43	2.78

Mean Ratings of on-the-job Behavior of Female and Male Employees Who Varied in Status of Job Title: Experiment 2

Sex of Stimulus Person	Attribute Dimension	Status of Job Title		
		High Status	Low Status	No Job Title
Female	Communal	3.48	3.53	3.57
	Agentic	3.77	3.37	3.46
Male	Communal	3.51	3.21	3.30
	Agentic	3.61	3.23	3.25

Mean Ratings of Stereotypic Attributes of Females and Males Who Varied in Occupation: Experiment 3

Sex of Stimulus Person	Attribute Dimension	Occupation of Stimulus Person		
		Employee	Homemaker	No Occupational Description
Female	Communal	3.31	4.22	3.81
	Agentic	3.69	3.02	3.00
Male	Communal	3.39	4.11	3.03
	Agentic	3.40	2.90	3.46

Mean Ratings of Stereotypic Attributes of Female and Male Employees Who Varied in Marital and Parental Statuses: Experiment 4

Sex of Stimulus Person	Attribute Dimension	Marital and parental statuses of stimulus person				
		Married with Children	Married without Children	Single with Children	Single without Children	No description of marital or parental status
Female	Communal	3.77	3.38	3.42	3.11	3.30
	Agentic	3.70	3.83	3.91	3.84	3.49
Male	Communal	3.86	3.10	3.66	2.87	3.40
	Agentic	3.59	3.54	3.75	3.60	3.45

Mean Ratings of Stereotypic Attributes of Female and Male Employees Who Varied in Choice to be Employed: Experiment 5

Sex of Stimulus Person	Attribute Dimension	Choice of Stimulus Person to be Employed		
		Employed by choice	Employed out of necessity	No choice information
Female	Communal	3.38	3.23	3.41
	Agentic	3.86	2.95	3.80
Male	Communal	3.45	2.98	3.27
	Agentic	3.85	2.66	3.38

Mean Ratings of Stereotypic Attributes of Females and Males Who Varied in Occupation: Experiment 6

Sex of Stimulus Person	Attribute Dimension	Occupation of stimulus person			
		Full-time Employee	Part-time Employee	Home-maker	No occupational description
Female	Communal	3.23	3.66	4.20	3.82
	Agentic	3.60	2.95	2.87	3.06
Male	Communal	3.28	3.28	4.11	2.99
	\gentic	3.40	2.59	2.88	3.41